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ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC
AS VIEWED BY COMMUNIST AND NON-COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS IN THE DIASPORA

Comment: Since the end of World War II, the Jewish Communist and non-Communist press in the Diaspora has published many articles on anti-Semitic manifestations in the German Federal Republic. Jewish Communist newspapers (including one non-Jewish Communist paper) published in Budapest, Berlin, Sofia, New York, and Toronto between 6 December 1951 and 12 November 1952, have constantly criticized the prevalent anti-Semitism of West Germany in connection with Nazism, past and present. These newspapers not only designated this anti-Semitism as a policy followed by the Bonn government on orders from the West but also exploited Jewish non-Communist press articles which, in some instances, attributed the West German anti-Semitism to the Nazi loyalty of a number of German officials.

This report presents reactions to anti-Semitism in the German Federal Republic as reported in the Jewish Communist press during the above-mentioned periods and some comments on this same problem by a Jewish non-Communist newspaper.

25X1

I. COMMUNIST AND PRO-COMMUNIST REACTION

A. Establishment of Nazi Organizations

In a front-page article which appeared in the Budapest Jewish Communist Hungarian-language newspaper Uj Elet dated 6 December 1951, writer for the paper, Nandor Hegedus, wrote that news is being published daily [everywhere] about what he called the news regarding the West German Hitlerite movement. In this connection, he quoted the non-Communist Jewish Chronicle of London as having reported the following:

- 1 -

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25X1

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"Thirty neo-Nazi organizations are now in active operation in West Germany, with headquarters in West Berlin. These organizations have a membership of 15,000 former SS and SA men and Hitlerite officials and youth leaders in West Berlin, plus 200,000 persons in the rest of the country. Furthermore, a secret Nazi organization has been established in West Berlin under the leadership of Herman Brinkmann and Hans Brockmann (former holder of the highest Nazi decoration). Members of this organization now secretly wear silver swastikas and commemorate every Nazi anniversary. Other Hitlerite organizations now active in West Berlin include the German National Youth, the Werewolf, and the Horst Wessel Battalion."(1)

The Berlin Communist German-language Taegliche Rundschau of 15 December 1951 pointed out that a Deutsche Liga (German League) has been established in West Berlin, mainly to combat Judaism.(2)

An article in the Canadian pro-Communist Yiddish-language Vochenblatt of 6 November 1952 also stated that a Nazi organization had become active in Bonn: the German Society -- the National Opposition Party [probably means the Social Democratic Party].(3)

The New York pro-Communist Yiddish-language Morning Freiheit of 10 November 1952 asserted that not so very long ago, the Socialist Reich Party [recently banned by order of the Bonn government] had led a strong anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic campaign in West Germany, and that Richard Borowski, Minister of the Interior of Lower Saxony, had announced that his ministry had recently banned 57 "underground" Nazi groups.(4)

B. Nazi Activities, Past and Present

In Uj Elet of 6 December 1951, Nandor Hegedus pointed out that the debasement in Peine [town near Hannover] of the monument of democrats murdered by the Nazis had caused great indignation among German workers, particularly in Peine, who, he declared, do not believe that the rightist Social Democratic Party can be trusted to protect them against new fascist attacks and who, therefore, are planning to take the "defense of democracy" into their own hands, if they get no satisfaction from the government. In this connection, Hegedus also mentioned that this decision was made at meetings of protest against the neo-Nazi movements, meetings which were held by the workers of Peine.

Hegedus then wrote about the secret tribunals and the so-called Femurteile, secret death sentences, similar to those by which Erzberg, Rathenau, and Kurt Eisner were murdered after World War I. This activity, he declared, is now taking place again in West Germany. As an example of one such case, he brought out that the editor in chief of the Hannoversche Presse was condemned to death by hanging recently by such a secret Nazi tribunal because he had published a sensational news account of the Berlin meeting of the SS and SA men and the debasement of the monument in Peine.

Hegedus then reproduced a letter, which, he declared, had been published by the Duesseldorf non-Communist Weekly Allgemeine Wochenzitung der Juden in Deutschland [date not indicated] and which told about the dreadful massacre of the Jews in the USSR during the early 1940s. Referring to the bestial deliberateness and the fully professional manner in which tens of thousands of Jews were exterminated and what butchery was committed among the Jews, Hegedus asserted that the recipient of the letter, Heinrich Lohse, Gauleiter, and at that time in charge of the liquidation of the Jews in the Baltic States, today receives a pension in West Germany and is an organizer of SS activities there.

Hegedus declared that the reproduced letter, written to Lohse on 1 July 1942 by the Reichskommissar for Belorussia 'n Minsk and marked secret, said in part:

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"Regarding the fight against the guerrillas and Jewish action in the Belorussian SSR, we have liquidated (i.e., murdered) 55,000 Jews in White Russia during the last 10 weeks. We have completely exterminated the Jews in the Minsk area. We liquidated 16,000 Jews in the Polish-populated Lida area, 8,000 in Slonim, etc. Specifically, those conducting these operations have, without contacting me, liquidated 10,000 Jews in the Glebokie area, whose systematic extermination was prepared by us. On 28 and 29 July, we liquidated in the city of Minsk around 10,000 Jews, among them 6,500 Russian Jews, mostly children, old men, and women; the rest were disabled Jews sent to Minsk last November from Vienna, Brno, Bremen, and Berlin by order of the Fuehrer. Several thousand Jews were also liquidated in the Slutsk area. The same is true of Novogrudok and Vileika. Nine thousand of the 10,000 Jews living in Baranovichi will be liquidated next month."

In conclusion, Hegedus asserted that, oddly enough, such men as Lohse, who had systematically planned and taken part in the destruction of hundreds of thousands of Jews, today enjoy the support and encouragement of great powers.(1)

In a special article entitled, "I Attended a Meeting of the New Nazis in Bonn," which was published in the 6 November 1952 issue of the Canadian Vochenblatt, Ida Shevon, its Paris correspondent, expressed deep indignation at the growth of Nazism which she observed in Western Germany.

She wrote about attending a meeting in Bonn of the German Society -- the Party of National Opposition [Social Democratic Party] which was likewise attended by SS men wearing boots, leather coats, and even military insignia, and where the men had no fear of raising their right hands in a military salute. She also brought out that the first speaker at this meeting declared that Hitler's action was fully justified in all respects. She stated that the main speaker, Werner Formelde, spoke against what he called the "chain of monstrosities that have been committed against the German people since 1945."

Shevon concluded her article as follows:

"The meeting was small and the collection (50 marks was needed to pay for the hall) amounted only to about 10 pfennigs. But I reminded myself that not so long ago, a certain fellow by the name of Hitler began his accursed career in a small hall like this. And in both cases, it was certain that the hall would be paid for by powerful and secret money interests."(3)

On 10 November 1952, Morning Freiheit, in an article datelined Bonn, Germany, 8 November 1952, pointed out that neo-Nazi parties in the German Federal Republic had nominated former members of the "Hitlerite Socialist Reich Party or "trustworthy old Nazis" as candidates for election on 9 November 1952 for district, community, and government posts in the cities of North Rhine Westphalia, Lower Saxony, and the Rhine Palatinate.

On the eve of the elections, Morning Freiheit continued, these Nazi parties distributed leaflets which "viciously" attacked the Jews and Catholics and warned them not to vote.

Morning Freiheit asserted that the Adenauer government, which it claimed, is infiltrated with Nazis and Nazism, expressed great surprise about these fascist anti-Semitic leaflets. It also declared that the neo-Nazi government blamed Communism for growing fascism in West Germany. It is the first time since the war that fascist parties in West Germany led an open Hitlerite campaign and put up impudently their own candidates for district, community, and government posts, the paper added.(4)

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In another article, on 12 November 1952, Morning Freiheit blamed Western democracy and Washington policy for again putting former Nazis into important posts in industry, society, and government in West Germany. It also stated that anti-Semitism has increased strongly in West Germany.

The paper pointed out that known war criminals such as Wilhelm Schepmann, former leader of Hitler's storm troopers, and Otto von Manteuffel, former general who lead a tank division during the Hitler regime, had been elected to local government posts.(5)

C. Other Comments on Anti-Semitism

An article in the Sofia Jewish Communist Bulgarian-language newspaper Evreyski Vesti of 1 February 1952 asserted that although Jewish newspapers in the West often affirm that anti-Semitism has grown greatly in the German Federal Republic since the end of the war, they fail to point out that this anti-Semitism is a policy followed by the Bonn government on orders of the US, Britain, and France.

The paper stated further that the speakers at a conference of 260 delegates of the Association of Victims of Nazism, which was held on 13 January 1952 in the Ruhr, very emphatically pointed out that the German Federal Republic is following a path leading to fascism and anti-Semitism. Evreyski Vesti declared that the final resolution of this conference stated in effect:

"The undeniable fact exists that anti-Semitism flourishes in West Germany. It exists particularly in the fields of employment. The Western Jewish papers fail to mention the numerous cases which have occurred of attacks on defenseless Jews by fascists and neofascists, or the refusals by West German authorities to restore to Jews the positions which they had held before Hitler."(6)

In its article on 12 November 1952, Morning Freiheit declared that a report made at a meeting of a number of directors of the US Joint Distribution Committee, which was held on 9 November 1952 in Paris, stated that increasing anti-Semitism in West Germany makes life for the 20,000 Jews residing there more difficult, and that it is simply impossible for them to find work. The report also stated that most of Bavaria's Jewish population, which amounted to 35,000 in 1950, had to flee because of anti-Semitic activities in that area, and only 7,000 Jews remained there.(5)

The Berlin Taegliche Rundschau of 15 December 1951 stated that Heinz Galinsky, head of the Jewish community in the Soviet sector of Berlin, declared on 13 December 1951 that he had noted an increase of anti-Semitic agitation in West Berlin for some time. The paper asserted that Galinsky had received daily numerous letters which mentioned incidents of Jews having been insulted in West Berlin, as well as a great deal of anti-Semitic propaganda literature.(2)

Morning Freiheit stated in an article of 1 August 1952, datelined Paris, that the influential neo-Nazi newspaper Informationsblatt, Rhine Palatinate, West Germany, recently published an article which categorically denied that the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews in gas chambers and in crematoriums.

The US newspaper declared that Informationsblatt denied in that article that the Nazis had persecuted the Jews and called such stories mere fabrications. Morning Freiheit pointed out further that the neo-Nazi newspaper stated further that these gas chambers and crematoriums were thought up by the Allies during the war to damage the good name of Germany.

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Morning Freiheit then quoted part of the article in Informationsblatt as follows:

"To justify to world public opinion the crimes which were committed in Germany after the war by the Allies, the lie was invented about the imaginary 6 million liquidated Jews. To make this story realistic, the Allies actually built crematoriums in various concentration camps. Thus, they were later able to demonstrate to the world what allegedly happened on documentary film."

This article has naturally aroused a great deal of resentment among German Jewry, Morning Freiheit asserted.(7)

II. NON-COMMUNIST REACTION

A. Comments on Anti-Semitism

The New York Yiddish-language Jewish Journal of 25 December 1951 published an article by one of its writers, David Vinover, datelined Munich, which among other things, stated the following:

"Regardless of the fact that the Bonn government of the new German Federal Republic asserts that all legislation regarding anti-Semitic restrictions which were established during the Nazi regime has been removed, the fact remains that a very large number of German officials in the new state remain true to the ideology of Nazism."

David Vinover asserted further that the Jewish German-language Allgemeine Wochenzzeitung der Juden in Deutschland, published in Duesseldorf (British Zone), had claimed that it had received a rather large number of letters from Jews located in various cities of Germany such as Cologne, Munich, Duisburg, Essen, etc., in which the Jews complained about being insulted in coffee shops, restaurants, and even in the streetcars by their German compatriots.(8)

Also, on 9 June 1952, in an article datelined Munich, the Jewish Journal asserted that a group of armed German police, accompanied by bloodhounds, recently went to the Jewish DP camp of Fernwald with the intention of raiding the Jewish shops and dwellings and confiscating all merchandise which was being sold there tax-free.

When the Jewish DPs blocked the path of the German police and would not let them enter the camp, the paper stated, the police started to strike the Jews with rubber clubs; the Jews, in turn, answered with a hail of stones, the paper added.

However, the Jewish Journal continued, on the request of the German leader of the DP camp, the police turned back and left the camp before any blood was shed.

Afterwards, the Jewish DPs in Fernwald held a mass meeting at which many of them expressed the desire to leave Germany as soon as possible, the paper concluded.(9)

In another article, datelined Freiburg, Germany, Jewish Journal of 20 June 1952 stated that a student at Freiburg University declared a hunger strike in protest against the current showing in Freiburg of a new film by Veit Harlan, who produced anti-Semitic pictures during the Nazi regime.

The article in Jewish Journal asserted further that this student had claimed that he would fast until the Harlan film is withdrawn from Freiburg and that as long as no proper restitution is made for the persecution of Jews, the showing of the new Harlan film is "provocatory." Moreover, the paper stated that the general student council of Freiburg University also protested against the showing of the Harlan film, which, it declared, impaired the "Peace-With-Israel" campaign being conducted by the university.(10)

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1. Budapest, UJ Elet, 6 Dec 51
2. Berlin, Taegliche Rundschau, 15 Dec 51
3. Toronto, Vochenblatt, 6 Nov 52
4. New York, Morning Freiheit, 10 Nov 52
5. Ibid., 12 Nov 52
6. Sofia, Evreyski Vesti, 1 Feb 52
7. New York, Morning Freiheit, 1 Aug 52
8. New York, Jewish Journal, 25 Dec 51
9. Ibid., 9 Jun 52
10. Ibid., 20 Jun 52

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- 6 -

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